



Rhode Island State Police

General Order - 57I

<i>Section</i>	Law Enforcement Operations - Field Operations
<i>Article</i>	57 - Weapons
<i>Title</i>	Use of Conducted Electrical Weapons (CEW), TASERs
<i>Special Instructions</i>	

I. PURPOSE

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This policy establishes guidelines for authorized Division Members regarding the use (display/deployment) of the X-26 Advanced TASER Conducted Electrical Weapon (CEW), hereinafter referred to as the *TASER*.

II. DEFINITIONS

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- A. *TASER* - a hand held, energy conducting weapon that fires probes into a subject from a compressed air cartridge. These probes are connected to the *TASER* by insulated wires and are used to send out high voltage electrical pulses of short duration. The electrical pulses affect the sensory and motor functions of the central nervous system, interrupting voluntary control of the skeletal muscles and causing immediate, involuntary muscle contractions. The *TASER* can be utilized with an air cartridge (with the intended effect of neuromuscular incapacitation) or without a cartridge in drive stun mode.
- B. AIR CARTRIDGE - A detachable unit that is affixed to the muzzle end of a *TASER* that contains barbed probes attached to lengths of insulated wire, a compressed air (nitrogen) charge used to launch the probes towards a target, and 20-30 Anti-Felon Identification Devices (AFIDs).
- C. AFID - Anti-Felon Identification Device - confetti-sized tags that are printed with the serial number of the cartridge from which they are launched. AFIDs are ejected from the Air Cartridge when the *TASER* is fired and scatter over the firing area.
- D. POWER PERFORMANCE MAGAZINE (PPM) - the battery pack that powers the *TASER*, which contains multiple lithium power cells and also includes a microchip that contains firmware updates. The PPM is inserted into the grip of the *TASER*, similar to a magazine in a semi-automatic pistol.
- E. NEUROMUSCULAR INCAPACITATION (NMI) - involuntary contractions of the skeletal muscles of the body that cause incapacitation in a person / animal when subjected to electrical pulses (obtained using air cartridges only). The introduction of NMI to a subject will most often result in loss of bodily control and falling to the ground.

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- F. DRIVE STUN - the method by which the *TASER* is activated against the body of a subject, with or without the air cartridge installed, to affect surface tissues with electrical pulses in the direct vicinity of contact.
- G. PASSIVE RESISTANCE - "passive subjects" include those persons who question a trooper's commands in a non-violent and non-threatening manner and persons who are non-violently participating in public protest.
- H. USE OF FORCE OPTIONS consists of force options through which a Division member can affect an arrest. These force options begin with verbal communication and culminate with the use of lethal force. The Division member's own assessment of a particular situation, based on the totality of the circumstances, shall determine which reasonable force option he or she utilizes.

III. POLICY

- A. As required by the Division's Use of Force Policy, the lowest level of force necessary to perform lawful duties will be employed. Each individual deployment of the *TASER* must be an objectively reasonable use of force.
- B. The *TASER* should be used only against subjects who are exhibiting active aggression or who are actively resisting in a manner that, in the trooper's judgment, is likely to result in injuries to themselves or others.
- C. The *TASER* should not be used against a passive suspect.
- D. Fleeing should not be the sole justification for using a *TASER* against a subject. Troopers should consider the severity of the offense, the subject's threat level to others and the risk of serious injury to the subject before deciding to use the *TASER* on a fleeing subject.
- E. The drive stun mode should be used only to; supplement the probe mode to complete the incapacitation circuit; as a countermeasure to gain separation between troopers and the subject so that troopers can consider another force option; as a pain compliance method to overcome active resistance to comply with lawful commands when the totality of the circumstances indicate that other available options would reasonably appear ineffective, impractical or would present a greater danger to the officer, the subject or others.
- F. Deployment of the *TASER* is to be considered the same force option as the Division CAS expandable baton, wooden riot baton, and/or less-than-lethal munitions. The *TASER* is not a substitute for lethal force. There are four separate *TASER* modes of employment (two display modes and two deployment modes):
 - 1. Display: A non-contact demonstration of the *TASER*. The *TASER* is unholstered and directed at the targeted subject with the laser sight display activated. When feasible, verbal commands will accompany the display, with

the purpose of convincing the subject to comply before moving to drive stun or air cartridge/probe employment.

2. Spark Display: A non-contact demonstration of the *TASER*'s capability to discharge electricity. The air cartridge will be removed from the *TASER*. The *TASER* will be un-holstered and pointed in a safe direction away from any unintended targets, including the subject, in the event that the trooper inadvertently failed to remove the air cartridge. The trigger will be pulled to display a spark from the exposed electrodes for an interval of up to 5 seconds. The purpose of this display is to persuade the subject to comply with commands before moving to drive stun or air cartridge/probe employment.
3. Drive Stun (Deployment): At the discretion of the *TASER* operator, the air cartridge may be removed, or remain affixed.
 - a. Cartridge removed: The air cartridge will be removed from the *TASER*. The *TASER* muzzle will then be pressed firmly into an area of large muscle mass. Avoid targeting the head, throat, breast, chest or area of the heart, genitals, or known pre-existing injury areas. The safety will be taken off and trigger will be pulled (duration at the discretion of the *TASER* operator) to deliver electrical pulses. Note: ensure the air cartridge is held at least six inches away from the head of the *TASER* when pulses are delivered. Failure to do this may result in a deployment of the probes from the cartridge due to static charge. The safety will be engaged (ending the pulses) at the earliest sign of subject compliance. Voice commands will continue to be given while the drive stun is delivered. If three five-second cycles, or a total of 15 seconds of drive stun are unsuccessful in obtaining the desired compliance, disengage and gain separation from the subject. Re-attach the air cartridge to the muzzle of the *TASER* and reevaluate the situation.
 - b. Cartridge affixed: Without removing the air cartridge, the *TASER* muzzle will be pressed firmly into an area of large muscle mass. Avoid targeting the head, throat, breast, chest or area of the heart, genitals, or known pre-existing injury areas. The safety will be taken off and trigger will be pulled (duration at the discretion of the *TASER* operator) to deliver electrical pulses. The safety will be engaged (ending the pulses) at the earliest sign of subject compliance. Voice commands will continue to be given while the drive stun is delivered. Note: the probes may deploy into the subject if the air cartridge is left in place for the drive stun. If this occurs, a three-point follow up (two probes in the subject and the head of the *TASER* placed on another part of the body) will provide maximum effectiveness in gaining compliance.
4. Air Cartridge Deployment: Utilizing the laser sight, aim *TASER* below the subject's head, neck and chest area (below rib cage) and away from genitals if

possible. Engagement range is zero (contact shot) to 25 feet. Continue to issue voice commands while the subject is under the effect of NMI. Assisting Troopers may engage in handcuffing techniques while the subject is under the effects of NMI but should avoid touching wires. (Note: NMI will likely cause a subject to fall to the ground. If possible, have assisting Troopers step forward and guide the subject's fall, particularly to prevent a subject's head from striking a hard surface.) Additional cycles of electrical pulses may be required to gain compliance / control of a subject. The safety will be engaged (ending the pulses) as soon as the subject is handcuffed / restrained. Troopers should note that a subject under the effects of NMI may not be able to respond to commands during or immediately following exposure. Note: full NMI will not be achieved on a contact shot (2-3 inch spread). In the case of a small spread (probes strike less than 12 inches apart), or one probe misses, the *TASER* operator should, threat dependent, move in to perform a drive stun follow-up by pressing the head of the *TASER* against the subject's body at least 12 inches away from the embedded probe(s). If not safe to close distance on the subject, reload and reengage with a second cartridge.

- G. In less-lethal force situations, when possible, Division members should not use the *TASER* on the following subjects:
1. Women who are known to be pregnant.
 2. Small children (under 80 pounds).
 3. A person who is in a position or location where a risk of falling may lead to serious injury or death.
- H. *TASER* will not be employed if:
1. Near flammable gas or liquids.
 2. Arriving to assist other law enforcement agencies and the subject has already been sprayed with Oleoresin Capsicum (OC). The carrier in some OC sprays is flammable.
- I. *TASER* employment in tactical operations will be determined by the Tactical Team commander or ranking Division supervisor. Situations involving barricaded or suicidal individuals will include backup by lethal force options. The decision to use the *TASER* for the sake of the subject should never be done at the risk of a Division member's safety.

- J. A Division member who uses the *TASER* will first announce his/her intention to other members present to prevent the chance of a sympathetic discharge of lethal force by other Troopers.

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- K. After the *TASER* is employed, the suspect will be handcuffed, and a search of that person conducted for weapons. If the subject was engaged with air cartridge/probes and the skin penetrated, arresting Troopers will take necessary precautions to avoid contamination by potentially infectious bodily fluids. If probes are fully embedded in tissue, the subject will be taken to the Emergency Room at the nearest hospital facility for probe removal and evaluation. If the location of probes prohibits the subject from being transported without causing further injury, then EMS personnel may be called to remove the probes or, as a last resort, the Division member may do so wearing protective gloves. Probes will be pulled straight out to avoid causing further tissue damage from the barbed tips. Probes will be broken free of wires and placed in biohazard containers for proper disposal. Drive stuns may produce small non-permanent welts on the skin and a supervisor will determine if a medical evaluation will be required.

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[1.3.11a](#)

- L. Upon use of a *TASER*, a Response to Resistance/Non-Compliance report will be completed and forwarded to the Captain - Professional Standards Unit. If an air cartridge was utilized, the *TASER* operator will collect 2-3 AFID tags, which are expelled onto the ground when the *TASER* is discharged. These AFIDs will be secured in an envelope (i.e. -RITT envelope) after which a property number will be taken, and they will be attached to the report. In a situation where the AFIDs could not be retrieved due to environmental conditions (rain, wind, snow), the black plastic expended cartridge will be saved and attached to the case in place of the AFIDs. The sworn member shall articulate in their narrative that either the AFIDs or cartridge was saved and attached to the paperwork. The sworn member who fired the cartridge will forward, electronically, the arrest number and serial number of the cartridge(s) to the Division Range Officer, after which replacement cartridge(s) will be issued. Additionally, if deemed necessary by the Captain, a data port download will be completed by qualified personnel.

IV. PRECAUTIONS

- A. Air cartridges can be activated by a static electrical charge; therefore, Division members will exercise caution in carrying spare cartridges on their person. Unless imminent use of the *TASER* is anticipated, it is recommended that spare cartridges be carried with the hard plastic safety cover installed.

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- B. Authorized personnel who take their assigned *TASER* home shall insure that non-authorized personnel do not have access to it. Although not a lethal weapon, serious injuries can be caused by the barbed probes striking vulnerable areas such as the eyes.
- C. If a *TASER* cartridge is deployed accidentally, the sworn member will notify their Supervisor and submit an interdepartmental communication electronically to the Division Range Officer, detailing the circumstances of the discharge and the cartridge serial number. The Range Officer will subsequently issue a replacement cartridge.

V. TRAINING

Documented training and certification by a certified instructor is required for all sworn personnel who shall complete the Division training course before carrying or employing the *TASER*.

- A. Initial qualification shall consist of two parts: a written test with a minimum passing score of 80%, and a practical application phase involving the successful deployment of air cartridges against two separate targets within an allotted time (pass/fail). Refresher training is required annually to maintain certification and will consist of the practical application phase only. Should a member not meet the training requirements, he/she will be prohibited from carrying the *TASER* until he/she successfully completes a remedial training course. The Division Range Officer shall maintain a roster of Division personnel who have successfully completed training and are authorized to carry the *TASER*.

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- B. *TASER* Remedial Training:
 1. Should a member received a score lower than 80% on the written examination, he/she will receive one-on-one remedial instruction by a certified instructor in the area of deficiency and the exam will be re-administered.
 2. Should a member fail to pass the required practical phase of the evaluation, he/she will receive remedial one-on-one training by a certified instructor until proficiency is attained. A re-test will be administered following the remedial training. If a member fails to attain a passing score, they will be scheduled to receive additional remedial training on a separate date. A re-test will be administered following this training. If the member fails to attain a passing score after this third attempt, the Division Commander or Detective Commander will be notified. The member will be restricted from carrying the *TASER* until such time as he/she successfully completes a remedial training course.

VI. PROVISIONS

- A. Sworn members authorized and trained to carry the *TASER* shall place it on the gun belt on the opposite side of the Division issued pistol. When wearing Division issued raid vests, ballistic vests or plate carriers, members will carry the *TASER* in a location that affords effective deployment, but NOT in the vicinity of their Division issued pistol.
- B. The *TASER* will not be worn on the uniform duty belt during ceremonial duties.
- C. Division members authorized to carry the *TASER* shall conduct a maintenance inspection of the unit at least once per shift as prescribed in training. Replacement air cartridges and digital power magazines (DPM) will be maintained by the Firearms Training Unit. Cartridges will be replaced after use or upon expiration date. A log will be maintained by the Division Range Officer listing Division personnel and the cartridge serial numbers they have been issued.
- D. *TASER* units will be inspected, function checked, and approved for use by a qualified Division *TASER* Instructor prior to issue to trained Division personnel. In the event of a damaged or malfunctioning unit, Division personnel will immediately notify the Division Range Officer. The subject *TASER* will be placed out of service and the air cartridge removed. The Division Range Officer will coordinate collection of this *TASER* and will issue a replacement unit, if available.

By Order of Colonel Assumpico

Ann C. Assumpico
Colonel
Superintendent